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LETTER DATED 28 OCTOBER 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BENIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, for consideration by you and the members of the Security Council, a copy of the statement dated 22 October 1993 whereby the Government and people of Benin censure the military coup d'état of 21 October 1993 against the first Government democratically elected by the people of Burundi.

The statement appeals in particular to democratic forces throughout the world to take all appropriate measures to restore the rights and freedoms of all the people of Burundi.

I should be grateful if you would have this statement circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) René Valéry MONGBE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement dated 22 October 1993 by the Government of the Republic of Benin following the events in Burundi during the night of 20/21 October 1993

During the night of 20/21 October 1993 a coup d'état overthrew the first regime democratically elected by the people of Burundi in June 1993.

The Government and people of Benin vehemently affirm the following:

(a) This putsch, which was perpetrated at the instigation of former political leaders who were granted amnesty by the Government elected in June 1993, constitutes a regrettable blow that has halted progress in the sister Republic of Burundi and an obstacle to the establishment of the rule of law for the people of Burundi.

The elections of June 1993 were conducted in accordance with the principle of "one man, one vote", which is affirmed in international human rights instruments, in particular, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965.

Accordingly, it is evident that the political struggles which led to the 1993 elections in Burundi were of the same kind as that waged by the people of South Africa.

The Government and people of Benin are therefore legitimately saddened to note that the perpetrators of the 21 October 1993 putsch are reversing the tide of history for the people of Burundi, in contrast to the positive gains now being made by the people of South Africa.

This assertion of the exclusivism of a minority over the majority runs counter to international public policy and clashes with the aspirations now being expressed by the people of Africa and with the established universal trend at the end of the twentieth century.

(b) The Government and people of Benin deplore the fact that, at a time when Africa - in particular, sub-Saharan Africa - is being summoned by history to take up the challenge of its political, economic, social and cultural development, outmoded concerns are jeopardizing the prospects of the Burundi people, heralding a new era of violence, exclusivism and insecurity in the place of democratic security, which is the first prerequisite for development.

The Government and people of Benin:

(a) Urgently call upon the Burundi army to respect the freely expressed choice of the people, endorsed unanimously by all ethnic groups, and to recognize that its own interests will be served only through democracy and mutual respect for all segments of Burundi society, for under democracy and the

rule of law, every kind of minority can have its voice heard and its rights respected;

(b) Express their concern about the fate of Mr. Melchior N'Dadaye, the President of the Republic democratically elected by the people, and of certain members of the Government and of Parliament;

(c) Affirm the irreversibility of African democracy and urgently appeal to all democratic forces throughout the world to take all appropriate measures to restore the rights and freedoms of all the people of Burundi.